

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for improving activity in a pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet to improve the activity in the pet.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 in which the nutritional agent is a component of a nutritionally complete pet food.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 in which the nutritional agent is selected from the group of prebiotics and probiotic micro-organisms.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 3 in which the prebiotic is selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a long chain fatty acid.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a starch source selected from one or more of corn, rice, barley, and wheat.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method for improving activity in an elderly pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritionally complete pet food comprising a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet to improve the activity in the elderly pet.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 7 in which the nutritional agent is selected from the group of prebiotics and probiotic micro-organisms.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 8 in which the prebiotic is selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 7 in which the pet food contains about 0.1 to about 5% by weight of a prebiotic as the nutritional agent.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 7 in which the pet food contains about 10^4 to about 10^{10} cells of a probiotic micro-organism per gram of the pet food as the nutritional agent.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 7 in which the pet food further comprises a long chain fatty acid.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a starch source selected from one or more of corn, rice, barley, and wheat.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food which contains a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the dog to improve the activity in the elderly dog.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food comprising a long chain fatty acid and a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the dog, to improve the activity in the elderly dog.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method for ameliorating joint stiffness in a pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet, to ameliorate joint stiffness in the pet.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 16 wherein the nutritional agent assists in improving systemic inflammatory status in the pet.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 17 wherein the nutritional agent assists in reducing concentrations of pathogenic bacteria known to contribute to an increased inflammatory status.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The A method according to any one of claims 16 to 18 in which the pet is an elderly dog.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The A method according to any one of claims 16 to 18 in which the pet is an elderly cat.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food comprising a prebiotic selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides, to improve the activity in the elderly dog.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A method of providing a pet with more energy comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet, to provide the pet with more energy.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A method of improving physical activity in an elderly pet comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising about 1% chicory by weight, to improve the physical activity in the elderly pet.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method of improving physical activity levels in an elderly pet comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising at least about 1% chicory by weight as a source of inulin, to improve the physical activity level in the elderly pet.

Claim 25 (currently amended): A method of increasing activity level in a pet of at least 5 years of age, comprising feeding the pet a balanced diet comprising a pet food formulation comprising inulin in an effective amount to reduce joint stiffness, to increase the activity level of the pet.

Claim 26 (currently amended): A method of returning a senior pet to a previous level of liveliness, comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising inulin in an amount effective to increase physical activity in such pet, to return the senior pet to a previous level of liveliness.